REMARKS

Claims 14-29, 34 and 36-42 are pending in the above-captioned patent application after this amendment. Claims 14-29, 34 and 36-42 are rejected.

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the rejection of claims 14-29, 34 and 36-42, and hereby traverses the rejection of claims 14-25, 34, 39 and 41. The Applicant has amended claims 26, 28, 29, 36 and 40 with this amendment all for the purpose of expediting the patent application process in a manner consistent with the goals of the Patent Office (65 Fed. Reg. 54603).

Support for the amendments to claims 26, 28, 29, 36 and 40 can be found throughout the originally filed specification. In particular, support for the amendments to claims 26, 28, 29, 36 and 40 can be found in the specification at least at page 10, line 1 through page 16, line 17, in Figures 3-8, and in the previously filed claims.

No new matter is believed to have been added by this amendment. Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 14, 15, 20, 21 and 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Stewart et al. (US 6,142,409). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 14, 15, 20 and 21, and the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 14, 15, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) that is based on Stewart et al. be withdrawn. Additionally, the Applicant respectfully submits that a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) of amended claims 26 and 28 that is based on Stewart et al. would be unsupported by the art.

In particular, the Patent Office contends that Stewart et al. "teaches a guide assembly 10, the guide assembly comprising: a rotatable first roller 14 including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a plurality of discontinuous grooves (space between plateau 30) disposed into the perimeter surface, one of the grooves having a groove depth that varies along a length 'L' of the groove."

The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Patent Office's characterization of Stewart et al. Rather, the Applicant submits that Stewart et al. is directed to, in relevant

part, a corona discharge treatment roller 10 having a surface 14 that is laser engraved with a nonperiodic type pattern for supporting a web 12. The surface 14 of the roller 10 has a plurality of interconnected channels 22 and plateaus adjacent to the channels 22 that cooperate to form a surface texture 20. The surface texture 20 has well rounded channels 22 that are preferably generally curved in configuration and that extend the full length and circumference of the roller 10. The channels 22 formed by the laser engraving operation have a depth that is determined by the laser power level selected, such that the pattern depth is accurately controlled and a substantially uniform depth is obtained. The channels 22 are at least partially overlapping and are interconnected to form pathways for air entrapped between the web 12 and the surface 14 of the roller 10. These pathways extend in a random manner both circumferentially and longitudinally along the roller 10. Thus air can travel both axially and circumferentially along the roller 10 to escape from between the roller 10 and the web 12. The interconnected channels 22 are formed comprising preferably 50% to about 80% of the surface area of the roller 10, and the plateaus 30 between the channels 22 comprise preferably about 20% to about 50% of the surface area of the roller 10. (Stewart et al. Abstract, column 3, line 66 through column 6, line 9, and in Figures 2-6).

The Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest a guide assembly including a roller having a plurality of discontinuous and/or spaced apart grooves. As provided above, the grooves or channels 22 as disclosed in Stewart et al. are interconnected and are at least partially overlapping. Thus, the channels 22 of Stewart et al. can not realistically be viewed as being discontinuous and/or spaced apart. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully asserts that Stewart et al. fails to disclose this limitation as recited in the present claims.

Additionally, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest a guide assembly including a groove (or a plurality of grooves) wherein the groove (or one of the grooves) has a groove depth that varies along the length of the groove. As provided above, the channels 22 as disclosed in Stewart et al. are described as having been formed such that the pattern depth is accurately controlled and a substantially uniform depth (of the channels 22) is obtained. Having channels 22 of a substantially

uniform depth does not agree with the limitation of the groove(s) (or channel(s) 22) having a depth that varies along the length of the groove (or channel 22). Any mention of the channels 22 of Stewart et al. being well rounded or having a generally curved configuration would only logically be viewed as potentially creating varying depth across a width of the channels 22, if the channels 22 are going to include a substantially uniform depth as desired. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully asserts that Stewart et al. also fails to disclose this limitation as recited in the present claims.

In the present Office Action, the Patent Office contends that the claims are unclear as to what constitutes a length of the groove. However, the Applicant respectfully asserts that an analysis of the present application, such as provided herein, results in only one logical conclusion as to what could or should be considered as constituting "a length of the groove". For example, in paragraphs [0047] and [0048] of the present application, the groove length 74 of the grooves 32 is described as preferably being less than the circumference 62 of the roller 30A. Based on such description, a well-reasoned analysis would conclude that the groove length 74 is measured in a direction that is substantially parallel to the circumference 62 of the roller 30A. Moreover, as provided in paragraph [0052] of the present application, the specification specifically recites that "the grooves 32 are preferably aligned substantially parallel to the circumference 62 of the perimeter surface 56 of the first roller 30A." Further, Figures 3, 5 and 8 of the present application clearly illustrate the grooves 32 being aligned in such manner. Thus, the logical conclusion would be to view the length of the groove, as utilized in the present application, as extending in a direction substantially parallel to the circumference of the roller. However, even if the channels 22 of Stewart et al. are viewed as having a curved length and thus the depth should be measured along such curved length, the stated desire in Stewart et al. of the channels 22 having a substantially uniform depth would still result in Stewart et al. failing to meet the limitations of the present claims.

Further, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not disclose a method of manufacturing a tape roller of a guide assembly including the step of forming a groove having a substantially consistent width into a perimeter surface of the tape roller.

Still further, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not disclose a method of manufacturing a tape roller of a guide assembly including the step of forming a groove into a perimeter surface of the tape roller so that the groove is substantially aligned along and/or parallel to a circumference of the tape roller. As provided above, Stewart et al. discloses that the channels 22 are at least partially overlapping and are interconnected to form pathways for air entrapped between the web 12 and the surface 14 of the roller 10, and wherein these pathways extend in a random manner both circumferentially and longitudinally along the roller 10. Based on such description, and as shown, for example, in Figure 4 of Stewart et al., the width of the channels 22 varies greatly as the channels wind their way through and between the plurality of plateaus 30 that are included along the surface 14 of the roller 10. Thus, the channels 22 of Stewart et al. are not shown as having a substantially consistent width. Moreover, the channels as so described and illustrated are not substantially aligned along a circumference of the roller 10. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully asserts that Stewart et al. further fails to disclose these limitations as recited in the present claims.

In contrast to Stewart et al., claim 14 of the present application is directed toward a guide assembly that requires "a first roller including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a plurality of discontinuous grooves disposed into the perimeter surface, one of the grooves having a groove depth that varies in a direction along a length of the groove." Because Stewart et al. does not disclose all of the elements of claim 14, the §102(b) rejection of claim 14 that is based on Stewart et al. is unsupported by the art, and claim 14 should be allowed. Because claims 15, 20 and 21 depend either directly or indirectly upon claim 14, the §102(b) rejection of claims 15, 20 and 21 that is based on Stewart et al. is also unsupported by the art, and claims 15, 20 and 21 should also be allowed.

Additionally, in contrast to Stewart et al., amended claim 26 of the present application is directed toward a method of manufacturing a tape roller that requires the step of "forming a groove having a length and a substantially consistent width into a perimeter surface of the tape roller so that the groove is tapered to have a groove depth that varies in a direction along the length of the groove." Because Stewart et al. does not

disclose all of the elements of amended claim 26, a §102(b) rejection of amended claim 26 that is based on Stewart et al. would be unsupported by the art, and amended claim 26 should be allowed. Because claim 27 depends directly upon amended claim 26, a §102(b) rejection of claim 27 that is based on Stewart et al. would also be unsupported by the art, and claim 27 should also be allowed.

Further, in contrast to Stewart et al., amended claim 28 of the present application is directed toward a method of manufacturing a tape roller that requires the step of "forming a groove into a perimeter surface of the tape roller so that the groove is substantially aligned along a circumference of the tape roller, the groove having a groove depth that varies along a length of the groove." Because Stewart et al. does not disclose all of the elements of amended claim 28, a §102(b) rejection of amended claim 28 that is based on Stewart et al. would be unsupported by the art, and amended claim 28 should be allowed. Because claim 29 depends directly upon amended claim 28, a §102(b) rejection of claim 29 that is based on Stewart et al. would also be unsupported by the art, and claim 29 should also be allowed.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 16-19, 22, 23, 25-27, 34, 39 and 40 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Stewart et al. as applied to claims 14, 15, 20, 21 and 26-29 above. Further, claims 24, 34 and 36-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Saliba et al. in view of Stewart et al. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 16-19 and 22-24 are patentable over the cited references. Additionally, the Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection of claims 25, 34, 39 and 41, and the Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 25, 34, 39 and 41 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn. Further, the Applicant respectfully submits that a rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) of amended claim 36 that is based on the cited references would be unsupported by the art.

As noted above, the rejection of claim 14 is unsupported by the art. Therefore, claim 14 negates a prima facie showing of obviousness with respect to the cited references. Accordingly, claims 16-19 and 22-24, which directly or indirectly depend from

claim 14, are patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Additionally, as argued in detail above, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not disclose a guide assembly including a roller having a plurality of discontinuous and/or spaced apart grooves. Further, Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest such features.

Further, as argued in detail above, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not a guide assembly including a groove (or a plurality of grooves) wherein the groove (or one of the grooves) has a groove depth that varies along the length of the groove. Additionally, Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest such features. Moreover, Saliba does not teach or suggest, nor is Saliba cited for teaching or suggesting, a guide assembly including a groove (or a plurality of grooves) wherein the groove (or one of the grooves) has a groove depth that varies along the length of the groove.

Additionally, as argued in detail above, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not disclose a method of manufacturing a tape roller of a guide assembly including the step of forming a groove having a substantially consistent width into a perimeter surface of the tape roller. Further, Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest such features. Moreover, Saliba does not teach or suggest, nor is Saliba cited for teaching or suggesting, a method of manufacturing a tape roller of a guide assembly including the step of forming a groove having a substantially consistent width into a perimeter surface of the tape roller.

Still further, as argued in detail above, the Applicant respectfully submits that Stewart et al. does not disclose a method of manufacturing a tape roller of a guide assembly including the step of forming a groove into a perimeter surface of the tape roller so that the groove is substantially aligned along and/or parallel to a circumference of the tape roller. Additionally, Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest such features. Moreover, Saliba does not teach or suggest, nor is Saliba cited for teaching or suggesting, a method of manufacturing a tape roller of a guide assembly including the step of forming a groove into a perimeter surface of the tape roller so that the groove is substantially aligned along and/or parallel to a circumference of the tape roller.

In contrast to Stewart et al., amended claim 26 is directed toward a method of

manufacturing a tape roller that requires the step of "forming a groove having a length and a substantially consistent width into a perimeter surface of the tape roller so that the groove is tapered to have a groove depth that varies in a direction along the length of the groove." Because Stewart et al. does not teach or suggest all of the elements of amended claim 26, a §103(a) rejection of amended claim 26 that is based on Stewart et al. would be unsupported by the art, and amended claim 26 should be allowed. Because claim 27 depends directly upon amended claim 26, a §103(a) rejection of claim 27 that is based on Stewart et al. would also be unsupported by the art, and claim 27 should also be allowed.

Additionally, in contrast to the cited references, claim 34 is directed toward a guide assembly that requires "a first roller including a perimeter surface, a circumference, a longitudinal axis and a groove disposed into the perimeter surface, the groove having a groove length that is less than the circumference, and a groove depth that varies between approximately zero inches and 0.02 inches along the length of the groove." Because the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the elements of claim 34, the §103(a) rejection of claim 34 that is based on the cited references is unsupported by the art, and claim 34 should be allowed. Because claims 39 and 41 depend directly upon claim 34, the §103(a) rejection of claims 39 and 41 that is based on the cited references is also unsupported by the art, and claims 39 and 41 should also be allowed.

Further, in contrast to the cited references, amended claim 36 is directed toward a method of manufacturing a tape drive that requires the step of "rotatably mounting a tape roller to a drive housing of the tape drive, the tape roller including a groove having a length, the groove being substantially parallel to a circumference of the tape roller, the groove having a groove depth that varies over the length of the groove." Because the cited references do not teach or suggest all of the elements of amended claim 36, a §103(a) rejection of amended claim 36 that is based on the cited references would be unsupported by the art, and amended claim 36 should be allowed. Because claims 37, 38, 40 and 42 depend directly or indirectly upon amended claim 36, a §103(a) rejection of claims 37, 38, 40 and 42 that is based on the cited references would also be unsupported by the art, and claims 37, 38, 40 and 42 should also be allowed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 14-29, 34 and 36-42 should be allowed. The Applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at 858-635-2142 for any reason that would advance the instant application to issue.

Dated this 21st day of January, 2011.

Respectfully submitted,

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